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THE TRUE AND PERMANENT SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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It is the boast of present-day biblical science that it employs the comparative and historical method. If a particular subject of investigation is examined on all sides for itself only, it is, nevertheless, approached under the bright light of *comparative* considerations, and even if the peculiarity of the phenomenon is established, inquiry is still made concerning its *historical* connection. This comparative and historico-genetic procedure is, to be sure, by no means as new as one, in the pride of the progress of modern science, might easily suppose. No, the *comparative* method in the realm of religious inquiry shows itself in Ex. 15:11, "Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods?" or in the words of Jeremiah (2:10-13), "Pass over to the isle of Kittim [Cyprus] and see if there hath been such a thing." Moreover, the pointing-out of the *historical* connection of a fact is at least as old as the words in Josh. 24:2 f.: "your fathers dwelt of old time beyond the great river [i. e., the Euphrates] . . . and I took your father Abraham and led him throughout all the land of Canaan." Thus the comparative and historical method of modern science is *not her own peculiar discovery*, as many a one of her disciples so easily thinks, nor was the vision of antiquity as limited (as the facts just mentioned indicate) as we children of the new time are so prone to suppose. To be sure, we must, on the other hand, freely acknowledge that it is only in present-day science that the employment of both the above-mentioned methods attains maturity. But now do we through this new comparative and historico-genetic procedure obtain *genuinely authentic* results? This is quite another question, and one which has recently become especially living and prominent. In the so-called *Babel-Bibel* controversy¹ the assertion was made that "Jesus founded a genuinely new religion." Thus in a noteworthy manner the ques-

¹ Delitzsch, *Babel und Bibel*, Vol. III., p. 48. See in general my conclusive answer in *Die babylonische Gefangenschaft der Bibel* (Stuttgart: Kiehlmann, 1905; \$0.30).

tion is raised how the Old Testament religious history is related to the work of Jesus of Nazareth. This question I attempt to answer comprehensively yet simply in the following. I think the clearest way to answer it is to unfold the historico-religious significance of the Old Testament, and then seek to show how this led on and up to the work of Jesus.

The old Hebrew literature possesses, indeed, more than one kind of significance for human culture. With respect to *form* this literature possesses, first of all, value for the history of language. This collection of books illumines a long and important stretch of linguistic history. It furnishes us living signs of a chief branch of the Semitic bough on the stem of inflectional languages. These living traces reach far back into antiquity and arise out of a much earlier time than, e. g., the Arabic branch of Semitic speech. To the historico-linguistic importance of the thirty-nine writings called the Old Testament another formal significance is closely joined, viz., the historico-literary. But how? Should it not be of interest to the historian of comparative literature as a companion of other old literatures—e. g., the Indian or Arabic? Should not this little library awaken a lively cultural interest as to the manner of its composition? It is indeed just now a burning question how far the province of poetry reaches in the old Hebrew literature. Who should not be interested in the question whether rhetorical and philosophical writings are to be found in the Old Hebrew library?

This writing possesses further, with respect to its *content*, a high value for *propane* history. Who can overlook the fact that the old Hebrew writings are a source of very first rank for ancient geography, for ethnology, and for the political life of ancient humanity? In fact, a short time since, in a highly learned assembly, it was strongly emphasized that the Old Testament literature was the first of all to express the idea of a universal history, and in its chronology to present also the ground plan for a general history of mankind. At the last general session of the International Oriental Congress, at Hamburg, the well-known Professor Adalbert Merx, of Heidelberg, declared, with fullest warrant, that “the first presupposition of the idea of universal history is the thought of the unity of mankind and its unitary movement toward a definite goal. Both thoughts arise out of the Old

Testament. That which was already conceived by the earliest prophets comes to expression in the development of Greek thought for the first time shortly before the first Christian century, in the writing *De mundo* ascribed to Aristotle."² But in the threefold value of the Old Testament which I have thus far pointed out—the linguistic, the literary, and the profane historical—its significance is by no means exhausted. One must, in fact, say more. If one take the expression in its peculiar and proper sense, according to which it, by a recognized metonymy, represents the documents of the pre-Christian covenant between God and man, then the Old Testament has significance only for the history of religion or salvation. Its value resides only in the fact that it records the history of the first stage of the covenant between God and humanity.

But in what particulars does this significance of the Old Testament for the history of salvation consist?

1. It lies, first of all, in my judgment, in this, that the Old Testament records the originating causes and the epoch-making importance of the true religion of pre-Christian time, and thus discloses the foundation of the edifice which is completed in the New Testament. The Old Testament records first of all, of necessity, that God founded within his kingdom of nature a colony of the true religion. When, that is to say, the selfishness and world-deification of that humanity which was saved from the punishment of the flood had reached such a titanic height, as is illustrated to us in the building of the tower of Babel, there entered into human history that foreseen but not forewilled moment when God in the call of Abraham inaugurated a new kind of relation with the human race. This, as I firmly believe, real union of the divine sphere with humanity is expressed elsewhere in the Old Testament under different pictures. It is spoken of as a relation of father and children (Ex. 4:22, "Israel is my first-born;" Hos. 11:1, "when Israel was a child," etc; Isa. 1:3, "I have brought up children," etc). This union is also, on account of its innerness, conceived under the picture of a marriage of Jehovah with the nation Israel (Ex. 34:16, harlotry; Isa. 50:1, "where is the bill of divorcement of your mother," etc); also of a shepherd and his flock (Ps. 23), of a

² *Verhandlungen des XIII. Internationalen Orientalistenkongresses*, veröffentlicht 1904, pp. 195 f.

vine-dresser and vineyard (Isa., chap. 5); but especially under the image of a king and his kingdom. Everyone knows the words of Ex. 19: 5 f.: "If ye will obey my voice indeed . . . ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests." Therefore, from the point of view to which we have now come in our discussion, we may express it thus: The significance of the Old Testament for the history of salvation consists first in this, that it narrates the occasion of the founding of a special kingdom of God. Oh, the impiety of man—the disobedience, the selfishness, the sensuality and indolence, these moments of carnality—which occasioned the founding of this kingdom! Thanks to thee, thou fervent grace of God, that brought to completion the plan to make possible to man freedom from the guilt and bondage of sin!

How unspeakably important, then, is the Old Testament, because it records the beginnings, the originating causes and first stages, of the history of the kingdom of grace. We all know what an unsatisfying impression a torso makes on a beholder. Who does not recall in art "The Dying Gaul?" The history of salvation would resemble a torso without feet, if we were deprived of the Old Testament. Or let one imagine for himself the task of relating the history of the United States beginning with the time of Washington and Benjamin Franklin. How the presuppositions for their work would be wanting! Such a chasm would also yawn before the inquiring spirit if the links intervening between the call of Abraham and the advent of Christ were lacking. The latter would propose as his task to fulfil the law, and yet to us the law would be unknown. Christ would say to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that which the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25 f.); but the history of the promises would not be known to us. These remarks are in our time in no wise superfluous. For many people would gladly execute the eviction warrant against the Bible, which they think they carry in their pocket, first on the Old Testament.

2. Thus it has briefly been indicated that the Old Testament first of all brings to view the originating causes, the epoch-making importance, and the first period of the true kingdom of God. Its significance for the history of salvation consists, secondly, in this, that it sets forth the fundamental character and tendency of this true kingdom of God. This divine kingdom of grace possesses this characteristic,

viz., that its founding coincided with the call into a land. A second characteristic is that its citizens virtually came from a single nation. In the third place, it is characterized by the fact that the duties of its subjects are indicated in a number of particular ordinances. However, the chief peculiarity of the kingdom dating from the call of Abraham lies in the character of the development which it carries within itself.

This shows itself in the legislative foundation of the Old Testament kingdom of God. To the fundamental law, the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:2-17), further developments are constantly being added. First, the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20:22-23:33), according to whose supposition the covenant was sealed through sacrifice; then, after the first disruption of the covenant which was precipitated by the worship of the golden calf, a second Book of the Covenant (Ex. 34:10-26), etc.; also the interpretation of the law which Moses gave in his farewell address (Deut. 1:5 ff.). This progressive particularizing of the law throws some light on what is in itself a rather obscure matter, viz., the fact, as Paul indicates (Rom. 5:20), that the law should serve *to increase sin*. This is to say that the law serves as the guilt-register of Israel—and of humanity—and by so much as it is rich in details, by so much more is the heart of Israel—and humanity—impressed with the consciousness of guilt and the need for expiation.

At the same time the ordinances of the covenant were transferred from the outer soil of human conduct to the inner, from the sphere of the body to that of the soul. For, while in the Pentateuch fasting, e. g., consists in abstinence from food and drink (Ex. 34:28) or in the castigation of the body (Lev. 16:29), the prophet says (Isa. 58:5-7): "Is such the fast that I have chosen? the day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a rush? . . . Is not this the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness . . . to deal thy bread to the hungry," etc.? Or, e. g., for the solemn moment of the law-giving on Sinai it is commanded to appear in pure garments, thus demanding outer preparation and aesthetic beauty. But nothing of the kind is mentioned in the similar situations in II Kings, chap. 23, and Neh., chap. 8, and the prophet Joel calls to his people (2:13): "Rend your hearts and not your garments."

In accordance with this development of the divine law-giving, and

through this spiritualizing of the demands of the covenant, the moral feeling of the citizens of the kingdom should become refined, their conscience become more sensitive, and thereby their *desire for salvation be greatly deepened*. Thus the law would always be a tutor unto Christ (Gal. 3:24). The character of development which the kingdom that began with the call of Abraham carries within itself, includes as a fundamental tendency the *striving after its own consummation*.

The peculiarity of the Old Testament, that it, so to speak, looks to the mountain-tops, has first a clear *formal* indication in the joining of the Old Testament kingdom of God with prophetism. Not only Moses pointed out that his prophetic office would always possess a champion in Israel (Deut. 18:15), but also Jeremiah bears witness, in a very significant passage, that, since the emancipation of Israel from the Egyptian bondage, God had not ceased to send prophets who were his servants (Jer. 7:25). Indeed, it is a very noteworthy phenomenon in the life of ancient nations which is presented to our view in prophecy. There is, now, an external circumstance connected with this historical phenomenon which is altogether striking, and yet is not sufficiently valued. This is the fact that new champions of prophecy constantly arise without *any one of them depending upon the others*. Each one knows that he is directly dependent upon the center of the divine kingdom, and that he is commissioned by its Ruler. The yearning of the divine kingdom of the Old Testament for that which is beyond possesses also some *material* traces in the old Hebrew literature. Such a trace is especially seen in the chasm between the *ideal* and the *actual* which is noticed in more than one reference to the kingdom. This chasm shows itself for example in the relation of the kingdom of God to earthly spheres.

To be sure, the first citizen of this kingdom is led to a definite land, but it is an interesting fact that in the narrative of the patriarchs the first and only abiding element of their possession was a burial cave. Five times in Genesis this burial cave is mentioned as at Hebron (23:17; 25:19; 35:27; 49:30; 50:13). What a significant indication of the *actual* relation which exists between the special divine kingdom and the earth! The citizens of the kingdom of grace are, in *truth*, connected with the earth only through the grave. This idea

that the kingdom of God is not an earthly one shines forth from the significant words concerning Israel as a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:5 f.). The same recognition of the heavenly king of Israel is reflected in Gideon's refusal to assume princely authority over Israel (Judg. 8:23). In a later time, to be sure, the divine patience permitted the human kingdom (I Sam. 8:7-9), and the goodness of God supported David and other kings in the overthrow of enemies. But in the period of the great world-kingsdoms of interior Asia the relation of the kingdom of God to them is placed in yet clearer light. The divine kingdom of grace must not attempt to rival the human kingdoms in the accumulation of earthly means of power (as implements of war, Zech. 9:10) and in the desire for earthly ends. Rather, for the citizens of the kingdom of God is this the ruling principle: "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15). Further, the throne of David was destroyed during the exile and was not again rebuilt. From all these traces one could understand whither the relation of the kingdom of God and earthly spheres tended.

The fundamental tendency of the Old Testament to move out beyond itself is reflected also in the following series of propositions concerning it.

The eye of prophecy was more and more opened to see the super-human equipment of the future Lord of the kingdom of God. Without doubt the glory of the Davidic origin of the future king waned (Isa. 11:1; Mic. 5:1), and, later, allusion to the Davidic family as the source of this Lord receded (cf. Isa. 55:3-5), and in the Book of Malachi is wholly wanting. But all the more was the divine side of his endowment elucidated (Isa. 7:14; 8:10; 9:6 f.; 11:2), and his intimacy with God pointed out (cf. Zech. 12:10, but especially Mal. 3:1).

At the same time the office and work of the mediator of the consummation of the kingdom of God were more fully set forth. For the one whom an earlier time described as a star (Num. 24:17), or a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15), or a king (II Sam. 7:11-16), was now called a priest (Ps. 110:4; Zech. 6:13). The prophets even more clearly indicated the suffering of the future Savior. The clearest traces of this particularly noteworthy element of the content of Old Testament prophecy is to be found in the following passages. In Isa. 11:1 and Mic. 5:1 it is said that the scion of the

Davidic house is to be a participator in the catastrophes which must be visited on this house. He arises not out of the top but out of the root of the tree with which the family of Jesse is compared (Isa. 11:1), and he is to be born, not in the residence city of Jerusalem, but in the little town of Bethlehem, the home of Jesse, the father of the family (Mic. 5:1). Further, in Zech. 9:9 the coming king is characterized as one who makes his entrance in lowly fashion upon the animal of peace. Finally, in Isa. 53:2 ff. there is drawn for us a pathetic picture of the lamb which is led to the slaughter for the sin and guilt of others, and yet not once opens its mouth. It is also proclaimed by the prophets that only the removal of the guilt of man can prepare the soil upon which the pillar of the arch of peace between God and man is to be erected (Mic. 7:19; Jer. 31:34 *b*; Ezek. 36:25).

A fourth essential feature of the lofty picture of God's special kingdom which is drawn for us in the Old Testament is the increasingly urgent and clear invitation extended to all nations to enter the kingdom of God. This goal, to be sure, was not unknown earlier (Gen. 3:15; 12:3 *b*; Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:1-3, etc.; Zech. 8:23), but the promise is nowhere expressed with greater clearness than in the word of Mal. 1:11, "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same my name shall be great among the gentiles."

Finally, the striving of the Old Testament for a higher goal is most clearly shown in this, viz., that a prophet of the old covenant received the mission to be the herald of a new covenant. This was Jeremiah; and who does not remember the wondrous words found in 31:31-34 of his book? "Behold the days come," runs the message of the Eternal, "that I will make a *new* covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers . . . but this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it, and I will be their God and they shall be my people." The prophet Ezekiel also dared to promise an inner renewal of Israel (36:25-27). How clearly one sees here the disclosure of the ever new and compassionate love of God! Once God required of man that he fulfil an externally prescribed law, and that he be induced to be true to his covenant by a minor act of mercy such as the deliverance from Egypt was. It

was man's fault that this was nullified. Then God exhibited greater benevolence in leading them back from Babylonian exile, in order to arouse their hearts to repentance and gratitude.

The second fundamental element in the significance of the Old Testament consists then, in this, that, to use an expression recently preserved from another side,³ it characterizes the Old Testament religion as "the religion of hope."

3. But now the history of salvation consists, not merely in the history of the proffer of salvation, but also in the history of its acceptance. What fervent gratitude springs up in our hearts that God permits us to have a share in the weaving of this history of salvation! But is it not also a matter of deep regret that the divine patience is so often provoked by man—in fact, is exhausted? Beside the seven thousand—i. e., the small group of the faithful who, in the critical struggle between Jehovah and Canaanitish idolatry, bowed not the knee to Baal—stand the thousands who went astray and joined themselves to the sinful and sensual cult of the sun and of Venus (i. e., Astarte). The divine patience came to an end for the northern kingdom in 722, and for the southern in 586. As the holiness of God, as over against his mercy, was under the necessity of asserting itself, partly in the Assyrian and partly in the Babylonian exile, righteousness accordingly remains, and is seen to be, the fundamental law of history. The irreverence on the part of Israel for Jehovah her Savior was finally after so long a time burned out, and her inclination to sensual ideals was destroyed.

But the Old Testament records traces of the fidelity of the pre-Christian covenant people as well as proofs of its unfaithfulness. It thus performs a third service for the knowledge of the history of salvation. It also tells us how the covenant demands and covenant promises were worked out in the life partly of particular individuals and partly of the people as a whole, and thus affords a rich collection of attractive, hortatory, and admonitory examples. Let us at least take a glance into this rich picture gallery.

Who can but admire the hearty spirit with which Abraham obeyed the divine impulse to become the founder of a new group in humanity in a distant land? Who does not recognize as entirely

³ Wernle, *Die Anfänge unserer Religion*, 2d ed. (1905), p. 5.

praiseworthy that expression of his unselfishness and considerateness, "If thou take the right hand, then will I go to the left" (Gen. 13: 9)? Who can look long enough on the touching picture which is exhibited in Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah? How often has pride been humbled by Jacob's declaration, "I am not worthy of the least of all thy loving-kindnesses, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant," etc.? And how many struggling souls have been strengthened and encouraged by the bold statement, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Gen. 32:26)? Who can number the times that Joseph's indignant question, "how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" has given virtue an arm of steel in the battle against lust? Nor can we forget Deborah, wife of Lappidoth, how with inspiring summons and energetic march she won back for her people that political independence which is the foundation of worthy and prosperous existence; nor how as leader she counteracted the inner dissension which so easily consumes the vitals of a people. She is a figure of towering importance among the women of the Old Testament who combine the office of priestess of right with Vestal service at the altar-fires of religion. There is further the band of those who at one time fanned the love of fatherland to a glow, and again in critical moments adorned their whole life by means of their shrewd, calm, or earnest admonitory wisdom. Among these is seen the pale figure of Eli's daughter-in-law, who, because she feared for the capture of the ark of the covenant and the death of her husband, gave premature birth to her child and could find no name for it but Dishonor (I Sam. 4:21 f.). Here also is found the wise woman of Abel who was the means of saving her city (II Sam. 20:16 f.). No one, of course, forgets Ruth; but do we remember Rizpah? Along with the lovely example of childlike piety, there is the glorious heroine of self-sacrificing mother-love. It is certainly true that it is only with great effort one tears himself away from the picture gallery of great personalities in whose lives the Old Testament says so plainly to us that the best root and motive power for moral conduct is a firm religious faith.

So, then, it would be difficult to find a book which exhibited as clearly as the Old Testament, in reference to the destiny of a nation,

the truth of the proposition that "sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Indeed, in the history of the nation Israel there stands firmly rooted together, on the one side, religious faith with national prosperity, and, on the other side, religious unfaithfulness with moral sluggishness, political corruption and national misfortune. Recall, for example, the time of the judges.

Thus, the third service which the Old Testament contributes to the knowledge of the history of salvation is a precious and highly significant one. This living representation which it gives of the acceptance of the divine salvation by man, or his rejection of it and the consequences, is a very important element in the permanent significance of the Old Testament.

4. Finally, the true significance of the Old Testament consists also in the fact that its content is not without historical result. The stream of religious history which flows along through the Old Testament is *no development without end*. It had not the destiny of many streams of the desert which are lost in the sand. This stream empties into a sea—the sea of eternal grace, and so bears witness to the character of its origin. God has acknowledged the promises of the Old Testament prophets as his own.

But has God really done so? The affirmative answer is bound up with the Old Testament itself. This answer can be reached by a comparison of the Old and New Testaments. Since this is the case, it will here be unfolded.

A comparison of the prophetic perspective with the work of Christ results, in the first place, in showing that the latter in no wise corresponds with the former in any mechanical fashion. For, as was indicated above, the relation of the special kingdom of God to the earthly sphere was evermore pointed out as a negative one, both by the declarations of the prophets and by the course of Israel's history. The relation of the kingdom of grace to a definite land was interlocked with the advance of prophecy and the history of Israel. But is it uniformly and explicitly declared in prophecy that the divine kingdom of grace shall later not be bound up with earthly territory, and especially shall not be of an earthly character? Yet Christ in a solemn moment declared simply and very clearly: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). The prophets' eyes were, to be sure,

in the second place, more and more opened to see the superhuman equipment of the future Lord of the true kingdom of God. But how high the reality towers above the promise in this respect also! How the words, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father," etc.; or, "I and my Father are one; " or, "God was in Christ and was reconciling the world unto himself" (II Cor. 5:21); or "Son of God with power since (*sic*) the resurrection of the dead" (Rom. 1:4), accordingly sound like songs of the heavenly choir!

Thirdly, the representation of the office and work of the future Savior was ever more fully unfolded by the prophets. But when Christ appeared it was as the divine-human high-priest who by means of his own death offered a ransom for the sin and guilt of the world (Matt. 16:28) and obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12). Fourthly, while in prophecy the picture of the suffering Savior stood alongside that of the ruling son of David, Jesus, with an energetic "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 4:10; cf. 16:23), put away the glorious pictures which would have led him into the path of external glory, and at the same time illumined the sanguinary picture of the suffering Messiah with heavenly light. Fifthly, as the demonstration of God's grace which was promised in Jeremiah's words concerning the new covenant had not been realized, the sacrifice of God's Son was brought to pass in order to rouse the human heart to repentance, and to inflame it with gratitude.

Accordingly, it is a well-established fact that the Old Testament period of promise and expectation came to a close with Jesus, and was thus seen to be the beginning stage of a higher development. For Jesus not only said in Nazareth, after reading Isa. 61:1 f., "This day hath the scripture been fulfilled in your ears" (i. e., by myself who stand and speak before you); not merely announced to the period of prophecy, "Thus far and no farther;" but in the work of Jesus, according to uniform opinion, the highest expressions of prophecy were unified into a collective whole, an organism. Indeed, in Jesus Christ the highest peaks of prophecy are suffused with a golden light of a supernatural character.

Yes, prophecy is like the rosy dawn. It announces the future of salvation just as certainly as the dawn kisses the sun that she may hasten on before as his herald. Also the soft glimmer of the morning

dawn prepares the eye for the glorious light of day, and gives delight by anticipation to the sick hearts which yearn for the day. But the rosy red of morning is not the radiant beauty of day. Aurora pales when the king of day comes on in flaming power. So Christ was like a rising sun in the Old Testament period of the kingdom of God; but since the New Testament period he is the splendid noon-day sun in the kingdom of grace.

Precisely the non-mechanical organic manner in which the Old Testament is related to the New comprises the central point of the significance of the Old Testament and its divine consummation. This is capable of proof by means of a negative consideration. Let us suppose that the picture of the person and work of Christ which is delineated in the gospels corresponded quite uniformly with the lines in which the future Savior and his deeds are described in the Old Testament; let us further suppose that the time of the advent of Christ could be reckoned from the Old Testament: what would be the result if in the Old Testament everything were predicted exactly as it exists in the New Testament? From such a uniform agreement of the Old Testament expectation with the New Testament actuality one could conclude that Jesus got the thought of setting himself up as Messiah from the Old Testament; that he buried himself in the predictions of the prophets and reckoned up the time when the Messiah should appear, and the thought that he could fulfil the promises. What a dangerous weapon against Christianity would thus be placed in man's hand! But the relation between the prophetic message and Jesus' person and work *in reality* is thus qualified, viz., that prophecy resembles a flower which, under the beams of divine grace and wisdom, ever more fully unfolds and yet is surpassed by the fruit. Men could not, therefore, pronounce this adverse judgment concerning the origin of Jesus' messianic consciousness, and his self-estimate for the history of salvation. God be praised that he has deprived the unbelieving of our time of this objection against Christ! Let us not therefore mourn that the bridge between the Old and New Testament is not complete. Let us rather in reference thereto join in the words of the apostle: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

The center of the significance of the Old Testament consists,

therefore, in this, that it was planned as the preparation of a higher stage of communion with God. Must God then, on account of this plan, still maintain it? Now, that is to say: the unfolding of salvation *had to* advance. For God possessed the right according to his wisdom to follow a plan for the drawing of the citizens of the kingdom of God from outer to inner, from lower to higher. The divine grace *was* indeed compelled to present ever richer proofs of itself in order to attract men through ever greater deeds. It must expiate human guilt with ever heavier sacrifices in order to satisfy holiness, because righteousness must remain the fundamental law of the world's history (Rom. 3:26). Finally, this upward rising course of the history of salvation is expressed in the New Testament in explicit terms. Did not Paul once speak of "shadow of things to come?" Yes, he also says: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a feast-day or a new moon or a sabbath day: *which are a shadow of the things to come*; but the body is Christ's" (Col. 2:16 f.). Thus the institutions of the pre-Christian kingdom of God are designated as a shadow-mantle of the body of light of Christ.

Now, who has not many a time noticed a flame with a somewhat darker outer portion and a brighter center? Everyone knows that the eye can easily look upon the outer mantle of the inner brightness. But by means of attention to this the eye is strengthened so that it can finally gaze upon the flame in the center. See in this a picture of the character and vocation of the Old Testament. It is the outer and coarser mantle of the flame of divine salvation itself. May our eye also through intense consideration of this mantle be so disciplined that it will ever become more skilled to recognize the inner center of the flame of divine light!